

Letters of Support



Appendix

All materials are available online at: www.iowadot.gov/TIGER14-river

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

- » **Letters of Support**
 - » USACE Priority Project List
 - » TIGER Planning Grant Application Cost-Benefit Economic Analysis
 - » Iowa Department of Transportation's "U.S. Inland Waterway Modernization Reconnaissance Study" April 2013
 - » Iowa Department of Transportation's Lock and Dam Modernization Handout
 - » Iowa Department of Transportation's UMRS Action Plan Workshop Summary
 - » M-35 Application for Marine Highway Corridor Designation
-



Terry E. Branstad
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Kim Reynolds
LT. GOVERNOR

April 25, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary, United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

We write to express our clear prioritization of the Upper Midwest Transportation Hub (UMTH) project as the State of Iowa's highest priority for the United States Department of Transportation's Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant program and to convey our support for the five-state request for TIGER FY 2014 planning funds application for the *Upper Mississippi River Navigation System Planning Study*. Both projects underscore regional approaches to further state and national economic development, infrastructure improvement, and intermodal priorities.

Upper Midwest Transportation Hub (UMTH): The State of Iowa strongly supports the development of a regional, full-service intermodal facility in Manly, Iowa, at an established yard/terminal. The UMTH project meets the TIGER grant program's strategic goals and project readiness criterion, and its benefits extend beyond Iowa's borders to Minnesota and other Midwestern states. Moreover, multiple State agencies stand ready to quickly implement this public-private project.

We believe the UMTH project provides an innovative approach to invest in an intermodal project that will help:

- Lower transportation costs for intermodal shipments for Midwestern producers and consumers. Specifically, transportation costs would be lowered through the --
 - Improved condition of existing transportation facilities and systems;
 - Improved shipping container balance and availability for Midwestern products;
 - Increased transportation options and destinations for Midwestern products, and thus, more competitive transportation pricing;
 - Growth in warehousing and distribution centers in the region where intermodal service is critical; and,
 - Reduced "long haul" trucking to intermodal centers outside of Iowa and reduced rail congestion in the Chicago area.
- Facilitate the growth of Midwestern exports in manufactured and agricultural products, including value added products that help create jobs and increase family incomes.
- Reduce the use of fossil fuels and shrink emissions due to less truck miles and more efficient rail miles.
- Improve the competitiveness of Iowa's wind energy manufacturing facilities and biofuel products in the global marketplace.

- Improve transportation safety by reducing reliance on road transportation.
- Drive Federal, State, local, and private sector collaboration to improve the efficiency of the national freight network.

Additionally, the project will help achieve critical national objectives, including:

- Advance the President's goals to increase exports and improve America's competitiveness in a global economy.
- Support the core functions of the White House Rural Council and advance our nation's bioeconomy.
- Support the President's goals to reduce transportation-related air emissions and to diversify America's energy portfolio by improving the competitiveness of alternative fuels, including biofuels.

Upper Mississippi River Navigation System Planning Study: The State of Iowa has served as the lead for the jointly submitted application from five states -- Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin. This regional coalition understands the importance of this vital and unique trade corridor. Last year, State of Iowa leaders hosted a panel discussion in Davenport, Iowa, to discuss and highlight the importance of freight movement on the Upper Mississippi River. Iowa shippers, carriers, farmers, business owners, the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Iowa state agencies, and citizens of multiple states attended the forum to reiterate the importance of the Mississippi River to the movement of goods and assert the need to find a long-term, sustainable solution to the current infrastructure deficiencies. That forum began a series of conversations that underscored:

- The crucial competitive advantage of barge transportation that lowers shipping costs for bulk commodities (exports and key economic inputs), while also benefiting other transportation modes.
- The efficiency benefits of barge movements that also yield lower emissions than other modes of transportation. Lock delays increase costs to consumers and companies, and result in higher emissions and energy use for freight movement.
- The concerns about the reliability of locks and dams more than 20 years beyond their design life and in dire need of repair and improvement due to inadequate federal investment.

We are already moving forward with state and regional solutions, including a preliminary reconnaissance study on inland waterway modernization completed in April 2013, and also an application submitted in February 2014 for designation of the Upper Mississippi River as Marine Highway M-35. TIGER FY 2014 planning funds would advance the next step, the *Upper Mississippi River Navigation Study*. With input from the Corps, river transportation providers, economic development groups, regional and metropolitan jurisdictions and other stakeholders, the study will closely examine existing infrastructure and evaluate options for its modernization.

The Upper Mississippi River is a thoroughfare for trade and progress in this region. Today, it helps the nation compete in the global economy, with 78 percent of US exports of corn and soybeans flowing to the world market via the Mississippi River. We fully support the FY 2014 TIGER application for a planning study to help identify a long-term, economically sustainable way to manage the Upper Mississippi River and bring its infrastructure into the 21st century. We would be glad to provide you with further information as needed.

Although other Iowa TIGER grant applications may compete well with other submissions from across the country, the UMTB and *Upper Mississippi River Navigation System Planning Study* applications are the

State of Iowa's top priorities as they have the most significant and far reaching positive economic impacts. We appreciate your consideration of the UMTH and *Upper Mississippi River Navigation System Planning Study* TIGER grant applications.

Sincerely,



Terry E. Branstad
Governor of Iowa



Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor of Iowa



Paul Trombino III
Director,
Iowa Department of Transportation



Bill Northey
Secretary,
Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship



Debi V. Durham
Director,
Iowa Economic Development Authority



Illinois Department of Transportation

Office of the Secretary
2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764
Telephone 217/782-5597

April 25, 2014

Honorable Anthony R. Foxx, Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) would like to offer strong support for the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) VI planning grant application submitted by the Iowa Department of Transportation (IA DOT) for preparation of an Upper Mississippi River navigation study. IDOT has agreed to join with the IA DOT and other co-sponsors to contribute matching funds for this application.

The state of Illinois, as well as other co-applicants, share serious concerns about modernizing and enhancing the efficiency and reliability of transportation on the Mississippi River. The proposed study will include:

- An assessment of the current state of river navigation on the Upper Mississippi.
- Evaluation of activities that could be undertaken to increase the efficiency and reliability of the Upper Mississippi Lock and Dam system.
- Evaluation of opportunities for the upper midwest states to increase utilization of the Upper Mississippi.
- An inventory assessment of public and private ports, terminals, locks and dams, and intermodal facilities along Marine Highway Corridor-35 (M-35).
- A commodity flow analysis of future opportunities by interviewing major private industry (agriculture, energy, coal, oil, aggregate, manufacturers) on their future demands and needs on M-35 inland waterway system.
- An impact analysis if there were ever a failure, over an extended period of time, of a lock and dam at any particular point along M-35 that identifies the potential impact to other state's modal networks of highways and railways.
- Recommendations on how the sponsoring state, IA DOT, can better incorporate maritime opportunities into state freight strategic plans.

The study would include significant outreach to the Corps of Engineers, river transportation providers, river transportation shippers, economic development groups, and local, regional and metropolitan jurisdictions/organizations.

Honorable Anthony R. Foxx, Secretary
Page 2
April 25, 2014

The study area also includes the waterway from St. Louis to St. Paul, which reflects the collaborative efforts of five state DOTs that co-sponsored the proposed M-35 Corridor designation by the United States Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration.

The department believes that this request for TIGER VI planning funds not only would benefit the Upper Mississippi region, but also serves as an essential study for the nation. We encourage the United States Department of Transportation's favorable consideration.

Sincerely,



Ann L. Schneider
Secretary



Minnesota Department of Transportation

Office of Transportation System Management
395 John Ireland Blvd., MS 440
St. Paul, MN 55155

Office Telephone: (651)366-3798
Fax: (651)366-3790

April 17, 2014

The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FY2014 TIGER Discretionary Grant Program
Upper Mississippi River Navigation Planning Study

Dear Secretary Foxx:

The Minnesota Department of Transportation wishes to express its support for the Upper Mississippi River Navigation Planning Study that is the subject of an Iowa DOT grant application under the FY 2014 TIGER Discretionary Grant program.

In February of 2014, Minnesota joined with Iowa, Illinois, Missouri and Wisconsin in submitting a Marine-Highway Corridor (M-35 or "Waterway of the Saints") application to the U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration. This is the first time five states have come together to submit a unified application focused on relieving landside congestion, reducing air emissions, and increasing the efficiency of other surface transportation modes.

The proposed Upper Mississippi River Navigation Planning Study would allow the five states to further explore opportunities to enhance the Upper Mississippi River lock and dam operational efficiency and reliability, all of which have impacts on the regions' economic development and competitiveness.

Approval of this grant will enhance the capacity and efficiency of our transportation infrastructure that will grow our presence in new markets and bolster the regional and national economy. We ask that you give consideration to this notable addition to the integrated freight transportation network that we are all working for.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles A. Zelle".

Charles A. Zelle
Transportation Commissioner

Missouri Department of Transportation
David B. Nichols, Director

573.751.2551
Fax: 573.751.6555
1.888.ASK MODOT (275.6636)

April 21, 2014

The Honorable Anthony R. Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

This letter serves to support the 2014 TIGER Grant application being submitted by the Iowa Department of Transportation to explore enhancement opportunities on the Upper Mississippi River's lock and dam operational efficiency and reliability. The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) believes the planning study proposed by five Upper Mississippi River states, with the Iowa DOT as the lead, will have regional and national benefits since the Mississippi River serves as one of the main transportation arteries for the central United States.

This Upper Mississippi River Navigation Study would build on recent efforts to recognize and document the crucial economic role played by barge transportation, and the need for investment in the lock and dam infrastructure that makes navigation possible. The flow of agricultural and bulk products in the Midwest benefits greatly from the efficiency of commercial navigation on the Upper Mississippi River. This system is, however, at risk of catastrophic failure due to decades of inadequate capital investment. For these reasons the states of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin joined together in 2014 to submit an application for designation of the Upper Mississippi River as Marine Highway M-35, the first time five states have come together to submit such a unified application. The receipt of TIGER funds would help advance the next steps: a complete assessment of the infrastructure and operations, and exploration of improvements.

MoDOT recognizes the importance of commercial barge traffic to many sectors of the economy. We believe this study will help identify any barriers to efficient freight transportation on the Upper Mississippi River and allow public and private entities to come together to identify solutions. This supports MoDOT's mission and the goals of our long range transportation plan and we therefore support this application.

Sincerely,



David B. Nichols, P.E.
Director

cc: Michelle Teel, MO





Wisconsin Department of Transportation

www.dot.wisconsin.gov

Scott Walker
Governor

Mark Gottlieb, P.E.
Secretary

Office of the Secretary
4802 Sheboygan Avenue, Room 120B
P O Box 7910
Madison, WI 53707-7910

Telephone: 608-266-1113
FAX: 608-266-9912
E-mail: sec.exec@dot.wi.gov

April 24, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx, Secretary
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Iowa DOT Mississippi River Planning Grant Application

Dear Secretary Foxx,

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation strongly supports the Iowa Department of Transportation's submittal of a TIGER application for a 5-state planning study to improve Upper Mississippi River lock and dam operational efficiency and reliability. This study would complement ongoing regional planning efforts and support improvements in commercial waterborne navigation on the River. To demonstrate commitment to this important project, WisDOT will contribute \$20,000 toward the cost of the study, should a TIGER planning grant be awarded.

A successful TIGER application will enhance ongoing regional efforts. Earlier this year, the Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation (DOTs) jointly applied to the U.S. DOT Maritime Administration (MARAD) to establish a Marine Highway Connector along the Upper Mississippi River, from St. Louis, Missouri to St. Paul, Minnesota. The M-35 Marine Highway connects seamlessly into the U.S. transportation system, relieving landside congestion and increasing efficiency of other surface transportation modes. If TIGER funds are awarded for this study, Iowa DOT will continue to collaborate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the five states along the Upper Mississippi, river transportation providers and shippers, economic development groups, and local, regional and metropolitan organizations.

The Upper Mississippi has long been a valued link of the inland waterways system, servicing the export and import industries of mid-western commodities globally. The existing infrastructure is aging and the Corps has a backlog of repair and improvements. Future demand on the river is expected to increase after Panama Canal enhancement is complete. Completing a planning study will support navigation on the Upper Mississippi in the following ways:

- Ascertaining the current state of river navigation on the Upper Mississippi by assessing lock and dam infrastructure condition, operations and efficiency;

- Evaluating technological, infrastructure, operations and governmental partnership actions that could be undertaken to increase the efficiency and reliability of the system; and
- Increasing utilization of the Upper Mississippi through the M-35 designation, port development opportunities, public-private partnerships and regional marketing initiatives.

We respectfully encourage you to award TIGER funding for this waterborne transportation planning study on the Upper Mississippi River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Gottlieb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and the last name "Gottlieb" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Gottlieb, P.E.
Secretary

REPLY TO:

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(515) 288-1145
- 111 7TH AVENUE, SE, Box 13
SUITE 6800
CEDAR RAPIDS, IA 52401-2101
(319) 363-6832

United States Senate

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1501

April 11, 2014

REPLY TO:

- 103 FEDERAL COURTHOUSE BUILDING
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- 210 WATERLOO BUILDING
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WATERLOO, IA 50701-5497
(319) 232-6657
- 201 WEST 2ND STREET
SUITE 720
DAVENPORT, IA 52801-1817
(563) 322-4331
- 307 FEDERAL BUILDING
8 SOUTH 6TH STREET
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IA 51501-4204
(712) 322-7103

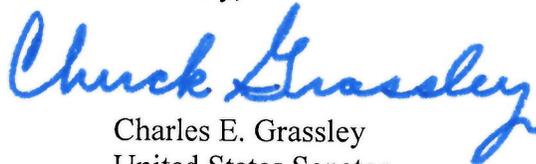
Paul Trombino III
Director
Iowa Department of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, Iowa 50010

Dear Director Trombino:

I have contacted Secretary Foxx of the U.S. Department of Transportation regarding the TIGER application being submitted by the Iowa Department of Transportation for the Upper Mississippi River Planning Study. I asked that it be given all due consideration. When I receive a response from the U.S. Department of Transportation, I will relay the necessary information to you.

Thank you for allowing me to be of assistance to you. If you have any further questions regarding this, or any other federal matter, please do not hesitate to contact me again.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

CEG/sjk

RANKING MEMBER,
JUDICIARY

Committee Assignments:

AGRICULTURE
BUDGET
FINANCE

CO-CHAIRMAN,
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS
CONTROL CAUCUS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1502

COMMITTEES:
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS, CHAIR

APPROPRIATIONS

AGRICULTURE

SMALL BUSINESS

April 24, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx,

The Mississippi River and its tributaries have long served as a critical national conduit, initially enabling exploration and settlement of the Midwest and Great Plains. It quickly evolved into a vital transport corridor and has supported steadily increasing shipping needs for agricultural and industrial development in the heartland for over 2 centuries. The navigation role of the Mississippi River is as vital as ever, but the supporting infrastructure is in critical need of renovation and expansion. The Iowa Department of Transportation performed a study in early 2013 that documented the importance of the Upper Mississippi River lock and dam system as well as the need for repairs and operational improvements. The average age of a lock on this system is 72 years, yet only minimal funding is allocated to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for operations, maintenance, and repairs, with no funding for the major improvements necessary for increased navigation efficiency and reliability that are urgently needed.

The Iowa Department of Transportation, with the support of four neighboring states, is submitting an application for an FY 2014 TIGER planning grant titled the *Upper Mississippi River Navigation Study*. This is the first time that five states (Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin) have come together to submit a unified application focused on the economic and environmental benefits of barge transportation in the Midwest – and the need for investment in the lock and dam infrastructure that makes it possible. These states have also applied to the Maritime Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation for designation of the Upper Mississippi River as Marine Highway M-35.

By supporting a complete assessment of the infrastructure and operations, and an exploration of improvement opportunities, the TIGER funds will help advance the next steps essential for assuring the Mississippi River's continued substantial contributions to the economy of the Midwest. I therefore urge your full consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,



Tom Harkin
United States Senate

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 22, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to provide my support of the proposal submitted by the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) to the Department of Transportation's "FY 2014 TIGER" grant. The Iowa DOT will conduct the Upper Mississippi River navigation planning project to pursue a planning study focused on critical issues impacting the efficiency and reliability of transportation on the Mississippi River.

I support the efforts of the Iowa Department of Transportation in adopting the Upper Mississippi River navigation planning project to recognize and document the crucial economic role played by barge transportation – and the need for investment in the lock and dam infrastructure that makes it possible. Several states are collaborating with the Iowa Department of Transportation on this effort, but Iowa will be taking the lead. I feel their hard work on this project shows a strong commitment to build on their recent projects regarding the Mississippi River. By investing in the Upper Mississippi River navigation planning project, this will help advance the assessment of the infrastructure and operations, and exploration of improvement opportunities with hopes to continue the project.

I have full confidence that the Iowa DOT will fulfill the mission and duties of the "FY 2014 TIGER" grant. Because of that confidence, I ask that they be given proper consideration for this year's TIGER grant. Please direct any correspondence regarding this matter to Tavis Hall in my grants office in Waterloo at 319-287-3233. Thank you for the opportunity to express my views and support of this grant.

Sincerely,



Bruce L. Braley
United States Congressman, 1st District of Iowa

DAVID LOEBSACK
2ND DISTRICT, IOWA

COMMITTEES:
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AND PENSIONS
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1502

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April 24, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx,

I write in strong support of the Iowa Department of Transportation's (IDOT) TIGER application for the Upper Mississippi River Navigation Study. This study, which was developed in collaboration with the states of Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin, aims to continue to recognize the crucial economic role of the river navigation system and would look for additional opportunities to enhance the Upper Mississippi River lock and dam operational efficiency and reliability.

There is little doubt in the extreme need for repair and updates to the ancient and frail Upper Mississippi River lock and dam system. As our markets become increasingly more complex and global, the importance of our river navigation system has only increased in terms of remaining economically competitive into the future. It is also clear that we will remain well behind the needed investments to fully address the river navigation infrastructure needs in the near future.

The Upper Mississippi River Navigation Study would add valuable input to the importance of the Mississippi River system. This study, while analyzing the current infrastructure condition and operations, would look past that for other opportunities to best use the resources at hand. This includes the study looking at new technologies for real-time barge data, efficiency operations, and government partnerships. The study will also evaluate opportunities for the Upper Midwest to increase the use of the river through an M-35 designation which an application has been submitted for, potential port development, public-private partnerships, and regional marketing and branding initiatives. The Upper Mississippi River Navigation Study would add important information and scenarios to best allow states like Iowa to capitalize on the great opportunity the Mississippi River holds.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important study for the continued economic

growth of the Upper Mississippi Region. I urge your full and fair consideration of the Upper Mississippi River Navigation Study application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave Loeb sack". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Dave Loeb sack
Iowa's Second District



Upper
Mississippi River
Basin Association

ILLINOIS, IOWA, MINNESOTA, MISSOURI, WISCONSIN

April 28, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

On behalf of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA), I am writing to express our member states' strong support for the Iowa Department of Transportation's application for a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant. This grant, which would be implemented cooperatively by Departments of Transportation from UMRBA's five member states of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin, would allow for a five-state planning study to explore opportunities to enhance infrastructure on the Upper Mississippi River commercial navigation system. We respectfully request this proposal receive your full consideration.

Formed by the Governors of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin in 1981, UMRBA represents its member states' common water resource interests and works collaboratively with both state and federal agencies that have management responsibilities on the Upper Mississippi River. UMRBA's member states have a vital interest in the Upper Mississippi River commercial navigation system. As such, our states are acutely aware of the need for effective, efficient, and collaborative approaches to planning for the modernization and enhancement of this inland waterway.

The Upper Mississippi River is an important component of the nation's inland waterway system and is extremely crucial to local, regional, and national economies, particularly for its ability to efficiently move a substantial portion of the nation's agricultural exports to the Gulf of Mexico. UMRBA's member states believe the work proposed in the TIGER grant application is critical in bringing greater – and much needed – focus to the Upper Mississippi River commercial navigation system infrastructure. Commercial navigation serves as a key link in the nation's multi-modal transportation system by connecting the Upper Mississippi states to the world economy, while also relieving congestion on highways and ensuring that other modes remain cost competitive. Unfortunately, the lack of investment in the nation's inland navigation infrastructure, particularly on the Upper Mississippi, has left us with an aging and deteriorating system that risks catastrophic failure if left unaddressed. Therefore, it is with concern for both the river system's near term reliability and efficiency as well as its long term ability to support commercial navigation that the UMRBA wholeheartedly supports the Iowa Department of Transportation's TIGER grant application.

If you have any questions or need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 651-224-2880 or dbuntin@umrba.org. Our states look forward to continuing our collaboration with the United States Department of Transportation as we seek to maintain and enhance this critically important inland waterway.

Sincerely,

Dru Buntin
Executive Director

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408 St. Peter Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102
Phone: 651-224-2880
Fax: 651-223-5815
www.umrba.org



**SOY TRANSPORTATION
COALITION**

1255 SW Prairie Trail Parkway // Ankeny, Iowa 50023
Phone (515) 727-0665 // FAX (515) 251-8657 // www.soytransportation.org

April 25, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

The Soy Transportation Coalition is pleased to offer its support for the Iowa Department of Transportation's application for a TIGER VI Grant for the purposes of conducting a five state planning study to explore opportunities to enhance the Upper Mississippi River lock and dam system. We are hopeful the proposal will receive thorough consideration.

As an organization funded by and led by soybean farmers, the Soy Transportation Coalition encourages any investment or development that will result in a more cost effective and reliable delivery of soybeans and soy products. We therefore are very supportive of the Iowa Department of Transportation's leadership and the collaborative relationship with four additional state departments of transportation to examine opportunities to improve navigation on the Upper Mississippi River.

Our nation's inland waterway system, including our inventory of locks and dams, is not simply a contributing factor to the success of U.S. soybean farmers, it is a dominant one. Other countries can produce soybeans at a comparable price. However, it has been and continues to be the ability to deliver those soybeans to our customers in a cost-effective manner that helps U.S. soybean farmers maintain a competitive advantage. For much of the key soybean growing regions of the country, barge transportation is the most economical, efficient mode for transporting soybeans to our export terminals.

Each year, over half of U.S. soybeans are purchased and consumed by international customers. Therefore, to remain profitable, America's soybean farmers must not only produce abundant supply and promote robust demand, there must be sufficient connectivity between supply and demand. One of the obstacles to maintaining and improving this connectivity is the increasingly dilapidated condition of our lock and dam system.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to monitoring and assisting this project as it moves forward.

Sincerely,

Mike Steenhoek, Executive Director
Soy Transportation Coalition

Funded in part by the soybean checkoff